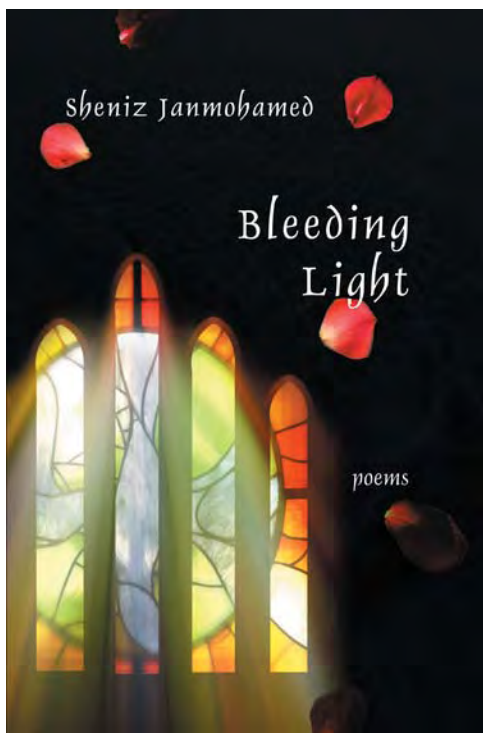


BLEEDING LIGHT

by SHENIZ JANMOHAMED

Bleeding Light is a collection of English ghazals tracing the steps of a woman's journey through night. In order to witness dawn, she must travel through dusk first. Throughout her journey, she is caught between West and East, religion and heresy, love and anti-love, darkness and the knowledge of light. Each couplet of a ghazal is an independent thought and reflection, a pearl strung into a necklace. Bleeding Light is fraught with opposing, stark, and often violent imagery heavily influenced by Sufi philosophy.



5 Questions for Sheniz Janmohamed:

1) If your book was a compass, which direction would it point? - Farhan, London

SJ: All directions at once.

2) Is there meaning behind the title and if not why did you choose it specifically vs. something else? - Sarah, Pittsburgh

SJ: "Bleeding Light" refers to the concept of becoming one with Light. When a being becomes one with the Source, the body literally bleeds light instead of blood. The themes of death, life and light and darkness surface in many of these ghazals and the title was chosen to reflect this dichotomy.

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3) You allude to "Israh" in every ghazal from Bleeding Light. Can you please elaborate on the significance of this? - Shivankur, Toronto

SJ: "Israh" is my pen name, and alludes the Surah al-Isra, a chapter in the Qur'an. It refers to Prophet Muhammad's night journey, where he met with the prophets of the past. For me, it signifies a journey within. Writing is a journey through night, and when the ink dries, dawn has arrived.

Continued on page 30

Book Review



SJ: I hope to record some of the ghazals in traditional and contemporary styles, and have already begun to collaborate with musicians from various cultural backgrounds.

5) What is lost when one writes ghazals in English vs. Urdu? - Abbas, Toronto

SJ: As someone who does not speak/write Urdu fluently, I can only imagine what may be lost. However, I do know that Urdu is inherently a poetic language, and a word can change meaning just based on how it is recited or written. English is not as flexible in that sense. Also, the meter and rhyme of the ghazal is not the same in English as it is in Urdu. However, I don't believe that I could write as effectively in Urdu because my command of English allows me to make philosophical leaps. To be able to do so in Urdu, I would have to study it for many, many years.

4) Will you record all/some of your ghazals recited in the traditional ghazal style, supported by musicians playing a different raga for each or some of them? - Ishwar, Toronto

To purchase a copy of **Bleeding Light**, visit www.amazon.com or www.tsarbooks.com/TSAR_BleedingLight.htm

Quiz results

If your score is 30 or above you have good driving sense. Michele Shapiro, editor-in-chief of Drivelikeawoman.com, says good drivers are “alert, cautious, and focused.” You know you have good driving sense because “you take driving seriously and recognize a vehicle has the potential to be dangerous,” she says. You know the pitfalls that can arise if driving is not taken seriously, so you strive to always be attentive while driving.

If you've scored 20 to 29 you have moderate driving sense. You likely are a good driver, but don't always follow the “rules of the road.” “This is someone who is a good driver, but does not take driving seriously,” says Shapiro. “Some drivers think if they keep to the speed limit, and the basic laws then they will be safe. However, drivers must be aware of other drivers, and people and things around them.”

If your score is 19 or below you have bad driving sense. These people are often “distracted, oblivious to their surroundings, and reckless,” says Shapiro. “You think of a car as a fun toy and that you're invincible.” Sometimes those with bad driving sense suffer from road rage. “This is uncontrollable anger while in a car that leads you to use your car as a weapon or use a weapon to harm someone,” she says.

Random Ramblings ...

That is exactly what my friend did. When the little boy was tired, he did not say, “I told you so”. He did not offer the easy bail out situation of having grandma pick them up. Instead, he guided him to make the best of the situation. There is always more than one option in any situation. One just has to look for them. What they did not anticipate was the appearance of an alligator. What a bonus for the child, and what a memory for the both of them! I suppose this was nature's way of saying, that when things get rough, look for the silver lining. Most often, there will be one.

My take away from the story was fourfold. Many times, as adults, we think we know it all. What we forget is that in our youth we may have wanted to do something different and were denied the chance by well meaning elders. In retrospect, it may have turned out to be for the better, but denial is a hard pill to swallow. Give the youth an opportunity to find things out for themselves. Remain supportive, but do not be overly anxious to bail them out. Offer guidance, but leave it up to them to decide. Lastly, have faith in nature, destiny or fate. Whatever name one chooses to call it by, it has a habit of throwing in unexpected bonuses in every situation. One just has to recognize it. Put the four together and we have the best gift we can give to any child. I thanked my friend for sharing this story with me. It has a lot more intrinsic value than just a bicycle, a boy and his grandpa.